

Marchant Holliday School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Stephen McShane HMI
Social care inspector	Thomas Webber

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and the government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

Marchant Holliday School is an independent residential special school located in rural surroundings in Templecombe, Somerset. Founded in 1952 the school is a registered charity, which provides education and residential provision for boys aged five to 13 years who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Some also have additional complex needs. All pupils have statements of special educational needs, or are currently undergoing assessment and are funded by local authorities. At the time of the inspection there were 20 residential pupils and 11 day pupils on roll. Some reside weekly or fortnightly or stay a few nights each week. The school's last education inspection was in March 2009. The previous residential inspection occurred in October 2011. This integrated inspection evaluated the quality of both the education and residential provision.

The school aims to offer positive learning experiences within a secure and caring environment that will enable pupils to develop their full potential for social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth.

Evaluation of the school

The school meets its aims and provides a good quality of education. All education regulations and national minimum standards for residential special schools are met. Pupils, often with a significant history of disrupted education and home life, successfully re-engage with learning, develop self-confidence and make good progress over time, although teaching and learning in lessons are satisfactory. A good 24-hour curriculum, an outstanding residential experience and teaching that successfully improves pupils' personal development, particularly their behaviour and attitudes to learning, lead to good outcomes. Safeguarding arrangements are robust

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

⁴ www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

and the promotion of pupils' welfare, health and safety and effectiveness of the residential experience are outstanding. Pupils are very well cared for in an environment which is consistent and nurturing where all pupils learn to trust others and feel very safe. The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and provides full access to the National Curriculum. It appropriately gives strong emphasis to developing pupils' literacy and mathematics skills and successfully improves their behaviour and personal skills. Published schemes give suitable structure and progression for learning and give pupils the opportunity to build up their skills or to revisit gaps in their learning caused by a disrupted education. Interventions, overseen by the school's special needs coordinator and carried out regularly by teaching assistants, focus on areas of particular difficulty and contribute significantly to pupils making good progress in speech, language and reading over time. This is a good example of provision being matched to the linguistic objectives specified in pupils' statements of special educational needs. Support to improve pupils' behaviour is very effective. The school makes very good use of its outdoor environment. The recently introduced forest school initiative uses the grounds and the 'quarry' very effectively. Activities help pupils to develop important team working skills as well as acquiring knowledge about risk and safety and the world around them. Productive and worthwhile activities are provided after school, in the evening and at weekends and these enrich and extend learning outside of the normal school day. Physical education, swimming and an emphasis on active play, such as using the climbing frame or playing team games with staff, mean that pupils are fit and healthy and also learn new physical and social skills and apply their energy appropriately. Residential pupils take part in a vast range of age-appropriate recreational opportunities that enrich and extend learning. For some pupils this builds on their talents particularly well. These opportunities lead to hobbies and interests that can be successfully continued in the local community or at home, for example horse riding or swimming and playing football for teams. Local trips and extended educational visits, for example to museums, the seaside or major cities, mean that the curriculum is significantly enhanced and brought to life. These visits are important to give all pupils new challenges and the opportunities to practise their social skills and behaving well in different environments.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall. Provision is not good because teachers do not consistently use the wide range of assessment information that is available to tailor the learning activities and their questioning precisely to ensure that pupils are making good or better progress in lessons. Nevertheless, provision over time successfully fills gaps in learning. It addresses the important weaknesses identified in pupils' statements and improves behaviour, engagement and motivation and this subsequently, with highly effective residential provision, leads to good education outcomes and outstanding ones for residential pupils. There are strengths in teaching. For example, there are strong relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils show a level of trust in the adults, which for many has not happened before,

that enables them to learn and make progress. Staff are skilled at ensuring activities move at an appropriate pace so that a learning momentum is maintained and opportunities for disruption are minimised. There is a consistency of approach which means that pupils know what to expect which gives them confidence to learn. Teachers provide interesting and engaging material, for example using a detective story to explore coordinates and contemporary videos to explore history. Such activities increase pupils' enjoyment and motivation to learn. The school uses a variety of procedures to assess pupils' attainment on entry and uses the information to report to parents, carers and local authorities at regular intervals about individuals' performance. Teachers set appropriate individual learning and behaviour targets which are reviewed regularly. Diagnostic testing takes place if a particular difficulty is identified. The school has taken recent action so that it can analyse individuals' progress more quickly and can pull together information on individual children more effectively. These are good improvements. As yet however, this information is not informing lesson content and pitch of work consistently. Too often, while activities in lessons are interesting and lively, and pupils are engaged and supported to complete the work, the intended learning is imprecise and work is not always consistently challenging. Written feedback to pupils is variable. It frequently is encouraging but too often focuses on the presentation of the work rather than reporting about progress towards the learning objective. However, it is supplemented by ongoing support and verbal feedback to pupils, which is sensitively given, to guide them and increase their self-esteem.

Pupils do make good progress. It accelerates the longer they spend in the school. Most pupils have had significant disruptions to their education and very negative prior experiences. Through gradual filling of the gaps in learning, and interesting activities pupils learn to re-engage and then apply themselves so that they make significant strides in reading, writing and mathematics. For many, the considerable gap between their reading age and their chronological age on entry narrows so that they leave as competent readers, confident to read aloud and use their reading skills to access the rest of the curriculum. Pupils acquire good knowledge throughout different areas of the curriculum. The pupils are interested and enquiring. They use information technology successfully. Although it depends on the complexity of pupils' needs and local provision, many pupils successfully return to mainstream secondary schools.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school's strong emphasis on building pupils' self-worth and self-esteem and preparing them to be successful citizens is at the heart of pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The priority given to supporting the pupils in their play and encouraging them 'to be children' through being active, climbing, spending time outside and playing with toys and other practical equipment, means that pupils revisit important early experiences that may well have been missed or disrupted. Through such activity, pupils learn the skills of sharing, turn-taking and they enjoy themselves at school and in the residential setting. The school has a consistent approach to behaviour management. It has high expectations of the boys.

Stability of staffing and close liaison between residential and education staff mean that behaviour is good. The school is calm. Pupils show good progress in managing their anger and anti-social behaviour. They develop a strong sense of right and wrong and restorative approaches enable pupils to suitably reflect on their actions when incidents occur. It is clear from the school's data that the use of restraints and sanctions, for example 'time out', reduces significantly for individual pupils. Pupils are motivated by the token economy that is in place, and enjoy being rewarded for their good behaviour. At times opportunities for pupils to act on their own initiative, to reflect about their own behaviour in activities and challenge themselves to improve further are missed. On occasions the routine reflection on pupils' behaviour is too general and too adult-led.

The 24-hour curriculum gives pupils plenty of opportunities to experience different cultural, artistic and musical experiences. Themed days or visitors help develop pupils' understanding of different cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and respect. Working in the school or local community, and raising money for different charities, promote pupils' knowledge of different institutions effectively and suitably encourage the development of personal responsibility. Pupils readily express their views and say how things could be improved. The school recognises that their views are not systematically captured so that pupils can take more responsibility for improvements.

The school recently recognised that a few pupils were having difficulty developing the necessary social and behaviour skills for effective learning. The establishment of a new class, based on nurturing principles and with a high staff ratio, has been successful in improving these skills. Experienced and intuitive staff have established predictable routines with substantial opportunities for pupils to talk about their feelings and specific needs. This means that any problems or concerns are addressed quickly and systematically. Attendance is much improved; pupils are keen to participate in the education and residential activities offered and feel more positive about themselves and others.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. A high staff to pupil ratio in the education and residential settings means that pupils are very well supervised at all times. There is always a member of staff to talk to and to support pupils through any difficulties. Staff are vigilant and are very aware of pupils' welfare needs and work hard to meet them. They also ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure. They are very responsive to pupils' moods and respond appropriately. There are excellent communication systems between the residential and teaching staff, and there are good handover procedures at the start and end of day to facilitate transition. Pupils are encouraged to be fit and healthy through the vast range of physical opportunities and the provision of healthy, varied and nutritious food and snacks. Residential pupils are fully involved in the management of their medication and are encouraged to take responsibility for it. Effective and robust safeguarding practices are implemented. All staff, including the designated persons for child

protection, have been trained at the appropriate level to fulfil their child protection responsibilities. The school maintains strong links with the local safeguarding board to ensure any concerns are referred promptly where relevant. Policies, for example to deal with bullying incidents, are implemented very effectively so that there is a consistent approach to eliminating bullying and pupils report that they are confident when incidents occur that they will be dealt with effectively.

The school takes positive steps to keep pupils and staff safe from the risk of fire and other health and safety hazards. Pupils and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures. Effective systems are in place to ensure that the various fire and health and safety checks, testing and servicing arrangements are carried out within the required timescales. A recent fire risk assessment, which was commissioned by the school, highlighted a number of recommendations which the school is in the process of addressing to further protect staff and pupils.

Staff maintain strong links with parents and carers and communication systems are well established and effective. Staff also provide support and practical strategies to help parents and carers better manage their children's behaviour. Responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaires were very positive on this point. One parent described the school as a 'godsend' as his son had improved '100%'. The school works very effectively with a wide range of external agencies, for example paediatricians, play therapist, educational psychologists and speech therapist, so that there is a coordinated response to meet pupils' specific welfare and educational needs.

Transitions into the school are well planned so pupils settle quickly and soon become confident learners. The school is very flexible in its approach to helping pupils move to their next placement. A few older pupils are currently attending secondary schools for sessions in preparation for future full-time placements. Pupils in mainstream were very positive of the support they receive that helps them to make this significant change.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Appropriate checks are carried out on all education and residential staff and others to ensure their suitability to work with children. The single central register meets requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school premises are set in 12 acres of gardens, fields and woodland on the borders of Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire. They consist of a large country house with modern annexes and separate classroom and recreation blocks. The accommodation includes classrooms, a specialist computer suite and learning support centre, library and assembly hall. Accommodation ensures that the curriculum can be delivered effectively. The outside areas include a heated outdoor swimming pool,

football pitch and all-weather play area. There is plenty of outdoor space for play, recreation and sports.

Residential pupils are accommodated in two houses. Both provide good communal space, together with a good number of bath, shower and toilet facilities. Apart from one four-bed dormitory, residential pupils are provided with single or double bedrooms.

Provision of information

The school provides, or makes available, all of the required information for parents, carers, local authorities and others. The school has clear and up-to-date information on its website.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The education and residential complaints procedures meet regulatory requirements. Pupils and their parents and carers are fully aware of how to complain and are supported to raise any issues openly.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

The overall effectiveness of the residential provision and outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. There is strong and effective leadership which has a positive impact on the excellent care provided. Safeguarding practices, including recruitment arrangements, are very effective and keep pupils safe and free from harm. Health and safety practices are robust and are implemented effectively.

The headteacher and members of the governing body monitor and review provision effectively. They identify weaknesses and any areas for internal improvement are quickly rectified. The general routines are extremely well managed and this means that residential life runs smoothly and efficiently. Staff are well trained and are supported well. They have to update their knowledge, skills and expertise by attending ongoing and regular training. The promotion of equality is well understood and practised consistently within the setting. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the quality of residential life and how this has had a positive impact on their behaviour and education. Although pupils have the opportunity to contribute their views to the operation and improvement of the residential provision, this is currently not as effective as it could be.

Residential pupils live in a warm, nurturing, structured and supportive environment. Managers ensure that pupils receive an excellent standard of pastoral care, where their social, emotional and healthcare needs are very well met. The diverse and complex needs of residential pupils are very well catered for. Pupils are extremely well supported and this means that they make significant progress emotionally, socially and academically as well as developing socially acceptable behaviour. There are very good adult to pupil ratios and this means that pupils are very well

supervised at all times. Very good relationships exist between residential pupils and staff and this makes for an extremely positive climate in the residences.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good by planning lessons that take full account of tracking and assessment data, ensuring challenge for the range of age and ability in each class.
- Improve engagement of pupils in the development of the residential and school provision by more systematically collecting their views and responding to them.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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Overall effectiveness of the residential experience

Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	✓			
Outcomes for residential pupils	✓			
Quality of residential provision and care	✓			
Residential pupils' safety	✓			
Leadership and management of the residential provision	✓			

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Residential special		
Date school opened	1952		
Age range of pupils	5–13		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 30	Girls: 0	Total: 30
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of boarders	Boys: 20	Girls: 0	Total: 20
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 31	Girls: 0	Total: 31
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 5	Girls: 0	Total: 20
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 39,000		
Annual fees (boarders)	£ 66,535		
Address of school	North Cheriton Templecombe Somerset BA8 0AH		
Telephone number	01963 33234		
Email address	headteacher@marchant-holliday.co.uk		
Headteacher	Terry Kitts		
Proprietor	The Marchant Holliday School Ltd		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marchant Holliday School, Templecombe BA8 0AH

Thank you for making inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were pleased to meet with you, talk about your work and the progress you make while at Marchant Holliday. We found that:

- you receive a good quality of education and all government requirements are met
- you make good progress, particularly in your reading, writing and mathematics over time although your learning in lessons could be better
- your behaviour improves a great deal and is mostly good
- you are cared for very well
- you say you feel safe and learn to trust adults to sort things if a concern arises
- you enjoy all of the many activities and outings that the school provides
- the residential experience is outstanding.

To improve the school even more, we have asked the headteacher, proprietor and staff to ensure that all teaching is effective and you are always challenged so that you make good progress in all lessons. We have also asked that staff find ways to involve you more in decision making and taking responsibility for improving the school so that it gets even better.

You can help the school by always trying your best and continuing to improve your behaviour.

It was a privilege to meet with you all and I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen McShane
Her Majesty's Inspector